

Sammy Davis, Jr. and Michael Jackson as frequent and enthusiastic customers.

How? As any great chef will tell you—its not just about the food. It's not just about the presentation. It's about the entire package.

HARLEM RESTAURANT SERVES ITS LAST FRIED CHICKEN BRUNCH

(By Karen Matthews)

NEW YORK.—A soul food restaurant that survived rioting and looting could not survive gentrification.

Copeland's held its last brunch Sunday, closing for good after 50 years and bringing an end to one of the greatest restaurant runs in Harlem history.

"It's a sad occasion," diner Gloria Jackson said. "You feel like a celebrity when you come here. They always cater to your every need."

Owner Calvin Copeland, who opened the place on 145th Street with \$850 in savings and saw it overcome hard times such as the riots of 1964, said the neighborhood's changing demographics no longer made it viable.

In recent years, middle-class black and white families have bought Harlem's handsome brownstones and fixed them up. They just didn't crave his savory fried chicken anymore.

"The transformation snuck up on me like a tornado," he said.

Copeland's denouncement brought out many elected officials including the dean of Harlem politicians, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charles Rangel. They all paid tribute to Copeland.

Rangel and others heaped praise on Copeland as high as their plates were piled with chicken, cornbread, potato salad and collard greens.

"You are more to us than a restaurateur," Rangel said. "You're a legend. You're hope. And you're inspiration."

The Rev. Calvin Butts, the influential pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, thanked Copeland, 82, for his dedication and hard work and prayed "that this will be a new day for him, a day of relaxation and enjoyment for the rest of his years."

Proclamations were presented from Congress, from Gov. Eliot Spitzer, from the City Council and from the state Senate and Assembly.

"It's an institution," said Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott, a 30-year patron of Copeland's. "It's important to come out and say thank you and let Mr. Copeland know that we appreciate all he's done for the community."

As Copeland thanked his customers Sunday, he left the door open for a Copeland's rebirth or for starting another restaurant somewhere else.

"With what you've showed me and how you feel about me, I think there's another chapter," he said. "Going home with no place to go and no purpose, I don't think that could work for me."

[From the New York Times, July 23, 2007]

HARLEM MAINSTAY SURVIVED RIOTS, BUT FALLS TO RENEWAL

(By Fernanda Santos)

Calvin Copeland was there when rioters burned and looted stores in 1964, when crack cocaine and AIDS tore families apart, when brownstones were for sale for \$50,000 and few outsiders dared move in. He endured fire and financial ruin, yet each time he picked up the pieces and prospered, as bold and resilient as the neighborhood around him.

If he could be the master of his fate, he would live out his days in Harlem. Mr. Copeland, 82, said yesterday, serving soul food from the restaurant he has owned for almost five decades, Copeland's, a relic of the past anchored in a place fast in transition.

Gentrification has pushed away many of the black families who used to patronize his business. "The white people who took their place don't like or don't care for the food I cook," he said. "The transformation snuck up on me like a tornado."

After falling behind on rent and bills a year ago, Mr. Copeland tried to hold on to his business, investing more than \$250,000 of his savings, he said. Finally, in May, he acquiesced to defeat.

Copeland's, at 547 West 145th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, where Harlem is known as Hamilton Heights, will hold its last gospel brunch at 1 p.m. on Sunday and then close its doors for good.

"I just can't do it anymore," Mr. Copeland said.

With its smoke-mirrored walls, L-shaped marble bar and carpet the color of honey, Copeland's is at once cozy and de mode, a place where men in polyester suits and women in hats dine alongside European tourists who come to Harlem to experience American black culture.

Yesterday, Fred Staton, 92, a saxophonist with the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band, which plays on Sundays at the restaurant, stopped by to wish Mr. Copeland well. A tour group from the Netherlands had brunch there. Others, however, walked out after learning that the restaurant was not offering its usual Sunday gospel choir. (Mr. Copeland said he was too busy preparing for the final brunch to schedule entertainment.)

"The food here is delicious, and it's so sad to hear they'll be gone," said Martha Marsh, who has lived in Harlem for 40 years and said she regularly eats at Copeland's.

"She's picky," added her husband, John Henry. "If she says she enjoys it, it's because the food is really good."

Mr. Copeland started the business in 1958 as a catering service, one of Harlem's first, in a modest storefront on Broadway north of 148th Street. He had but one worker, Gertrude Clark, who still works for him. Mr. Copeland, who is black, baked and decorated cakes; Ms. Clark, who is white and grew up on a farm in upstate New York, did whatever else was needed, which often included preparing Southern fare.

"I had never eaten collard greens in my life, and there I was making fried chicken and souse meat," said Ms. Clark, 73. She is now Copeland's banquet manager.

Mr. Copeland eventually rented the store next door, opened up a hole in the wall, expanded the kitchen and started serving breakfast and lunch, cafeteria style. It was similar to the one in operation today next to the restaurant on 145th Street, which opened for business in 1980.

In 1981, the restaurant burned to the ground and the insurance company went bankrupt before it reimbursed Mr. Copeland for the losses.

"I lost everything, except for the liquor," he said with a chuckle. "We had it in a separate room with concrete walls, and I guess the fire couldn't get through."

At the time, banks were not prone to lending money to restaurant owners, especially if the restaurant was in a place as volatile as Harlem, which had had two riots prior to the one in 1964, incited by the fatal shooting of a black teenage boy by a white police officer. But Mr. Copeland had many friends, and one of them helped get him approved for a small loan. The rest of the money came from Ms. Clark, who mortgaged an upstate property to help her boss.

"If that thing didn't go, she would have lost her property, she would have lost her job, she would have lost everything of value she had," Mr. Copeland said. "She had a lot of faith in me, and I delivered."

Copeland's became a destination for black families from as far as Philadelphia. Black

entertainers and other notables would stop by when in town. Desmond Tutu, the retired Anglican archbishop, ate there once, and so did Muhammad Ali and the comedian Richard Pryor, who threw money in the air when he left the restaurant so as to distract the crowd that had surrounded him. Mr. Copeland said. Natalie Cole is a regular. Michael Jackson came by once, but did not come in; one of the waiters took a plate of food to his vehicle, which was parked outside.

"I never paid attention to this stuff," Mr. Copeland said. "I was too busy cooking."

## TRIBUTE TO COLONEL HOWARD CLARK

HON. PAUL W. HODES

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Mr. HODES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the dedicated military service of retired Colonel Howard Clark, of Enfield, New Hampshire. Colonel Clark served his country honorably in the U.S. Army for thirty years, including two courageous tours of duty in Vietnam. He was awarded the Purple Heart for his bravery overseas, and continued his distinguished career in the military, including assignments at the Pentagon and as a Brigade Commander at Fort Benning, Georgia. His career was recognized with the award of the Legion of Merit for sustained superior performance.

Colonel and Mrs. Howard Clark are also celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary this summer. Together, Colonel and Mrs. Clark have served as a model of commitment, sacrifice, and selfless service to our country. It is a privilege to represent these two distinguished individuals in the United States Congress.

## HONORING THE LIFE OF LOS ANGELES POLICE OFFICER DAVID RODRIGUEZ

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and public service of Los Angeles City Police Officer David Rodriguez of the San Fernando Valley, whose achievements merit our recognition.

After graduating with honors from Van Nuys High School, he entered California State University Northridge, where he received a bachelor of arts in political science. During college he held several jobs, including an internship in my district office.

I was honored when I had the opportunity to recommend David for the Los Angeles Police Department Academy. I was proud when in 2003 he entered and graduated. David earned a reputation as an aggressive but by-the-book patrol officer and was recently promoted to the anti-gang unit. At 6 feet 2 and weighing 270 lbs he was a gentle and dedicated family man who took care of his ailing mother.

On July 29th, while on duty, Police Officer Rodriguez died during an automobile accident